



# Mimulus Memo

California Native Plant Society — Kern County Chapter  
January/February 2009

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings and  
best wishes for a  
new year in which  
we work together to

enjoy, protect, and

promote California's native plants here in Kern County and elsewhere! The rain has come, and the borages are forming basal rosettes, so I have hope for the spring and summer flower shows that we will enjoy on our field trips. Of course, that means that the invasive non-natives will be coming up at the Sand Ridge Preserve, too, and we will need to work on our project of removal again this spring. I would like to thank our dedicated volunteers for their work last year, and extend a request that others of you join us! Whether you want to take on a straightforward and finite job, maybe a one time event, or you are up for an ongoing job, our chapter needs you ! And please consider that you have an opportunity to work with and learn from some wonderful people!

LUCY CLARK

## Thank You!

### Eva and Gordon Nipp

hosting once again our Annual Pot Luck  
Dinner and Program in their wonderful home

### Debby Kroger

putting together a fun door prize event for  
the Pot Luck

### Laura Stockton and Marcia Wolfe

finding a CSUB student to receive a grant  
from Kern CNPS to attend the CNPS  
Conservation Conference

### Sasha Honig and Allison Sheehey

for volunteering for chapter responsibilities  
for, respectively, Hospitality and Rare Plants

Of our 102 members, only 22 have elected to go 'paperless.' The MEMO costs about \$1 per issue to mail out. These 22 are saving the club \$132 a year! I'm certain our members will embrace the 'low impact' alternative of an emailed Newsletter. I encourage you to visit our website and see the MEMO online and decide if you would like to receive future issues this way.

[www.kerncnps.org/NewsLetter/](http://www.kerncnps.org/NewsLetter/)

If you are unable to receive the electronic version I will be happy to send a paper copy.

Email me to sign up!

[MimulusMemo@bak.rr.com](mailto:MimulusMemo@bak.rr.com)

**There are still plants left over from our  
Plant sale. a list can be seen on our website:  
[www.KernCNPS.org](http://www.KernCNPS.org).**

**Interested buyers can contact Debby**

## KERN CNPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

President	Lucy Clark
Vice President	Debby Kroeger
Treasurer	Harris Morris
Secretary	Laura Stockton

### Committee Chairs

Field trip Chairs	Don & Yvonne Turkal
Newsletter Chairs	Stephen Cooley, Linda Cooley
Membership Chairs	Linda Cooley, Clyde Golden
Plant Sale Chairs	Debby Kroeger, Bonnie East
Program Chairs	OPEN
Hospitality	Sasha Honig
Publicity	Debby Kroeger
WebMaster	Stephen Cooley
Plant Identification	Denis Kearns
Conservation	OPEN
Rare Plants	Allison Sheehey
Plant Communities	Mary Warters

## DID YOU KNOW

that you can renew your CNPS membership online using a credit card? As an option, you can set it up to renew automatically year after year. It is quick, easy, convenient, and reduces the cost of mailing renewal notices.

[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

Click on the JOIN button

## Climate Change and the California Desert Conference

Please Join the National Parks Conservation Association, Defenders of Wildlife  
and Joshua Tree National Park for this annual event

February 27th , 9am-5pm at the Joshua Tree Community Center in Joshua Tree, CA

Featuring:

**Nobel Laureate Jean Brennan** (Defenders of Wildlife) on the impacts of climate change on desert wildlife, management strategies and wildlife corridors.

**Kirsten Ironside** (Northern Arizona University)- on the declining range of Joshua Trees.

**Lynn Fenstermaker** (Desert Research Institute) on the capacity of arid lands to store carbon.

**Bill Powers** (Engineer) on the Sunrise Power Link, Green Path North and the local generation of energy.

**A World Café Conversation** for all to talk about challenges and opportunities related to climate change.

**The conference is free of charge, but we ask that you RSVP to**

Seth Shteir, Program Coordinator for Air and Climate

California Desert Office, National Parks Conservation Association

[sshteir@npca.org](mailto:sshteir@npca.org) 760-366-7785

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## MEMBER MEETINGS

Everyone is welcome to attend membership meetings in the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Building on the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and “L”. Parking building is located on 18<sup>th</sup> between “K” and “L”. Before the February meeting we plan to have dinner together a little before 5pm at Flames and Skewers at “L” and 24<sup>th</sup>, with our guest speaker.

### Wednesday, JANUARY 14<sup>th</sup> - Annual Organizational Meeting

All CNPS members are invited to attend the organizing meeting of our Board to help us plan our activities for the next year.

Debby and I have set a date for our annual January meeting, and hope it will suit each of you. It is hard to work out a date, considering all commitments. We are hoping that **Wednesday, January 14th, at 6pm** will be good for you. We will meet at Debby's home again ([email](#) for directions). She will have hot soup for us, and I plan on cookies, so we are looking forward to seeing you all!

Please come with ideas, plans, your enthusiasm!



**Tuesday, JANUARY 20 - Cancelled due to Presidential Inauguration Day**

### Tuesday, FEBRUARY 17- The Future of Red Rock Canyon State Park, Mark Faull

**6:00pm** Denis Kearns and friends will lead us in IDing what ever we find blooming on the 17<sup>th</sup>!

Bring your Twisselman/Moe, Flora of Kern County or Jepson's Manual, a loop or magnifying glass, and your curiosity!

**7:00pm** Mark Faull, former long term Ranger at Red Rock Canyon will bring us up to date on the current status of Kern County's largest State Park and its evolving General Plan, with a digital presentation, including his photos of this beautiful place. Mark says, "It is truly one of the most important and amazing landscapes in California."

Refreshments will be served. Bring your friends to hear this important information. CNPS has an opportunity to be a part of the planning process, to help protect Red Rock Canyon.

# NATIVE PLANT EVENTS

## Growing Natives: Celebrating California's Beauty in Dry Times

**March 28, 2009** - Lafayette Community Center, Lafayette

**March 29, 2009** - Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley

Creating beautiful waterwise gardens with California native plants is the theme of this 2-day symposium.

The Saturday program includes presentations on the flora of California (by botanist and author **Glenn Keator**), garden design (by author **Carol Bornstein**), the structure of the garden (by **Phil Van Soelen**, from Cal Flora Nursery), herbaceous perennials and bulbs (by plantsman **Roger Raiche**), creating a native meadow (by **David Amme**), and connecting with the garden (by **Mike Evans** from Tree of Life Nursery). The program includes a continental breakfast, lunch, and wine reception. A selection of books will be available for purchase.

The Sunday program at the **Regional Parks Botanic Garden** begins with an inspiring talk by Director Steve Edwards, followed by a choice of guided garden walks and workshops on plants for dry gardens, aesthetic pruning, principles of irrigation, and gardening practices. After lunch in the garden, the program continues at **Native Here Nursery** with a presentation by Charli Danielsen and an opportunity to purchase plants. The day concludes with an invitation to visit two **spectacular private native gardens**: the Fleming garden in Berkeley and the Greenberg garden in Lafayette.

Registration opens January 1st, 2009. Members and subscribers of the sponsoring organizations receive a discount on registration fees.

Please visit [www.nativeplants.org](http://www.nativeplants.org) for more information.



BY MARK FAULL

from the "Desert Report" Dec. 2008

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In the northwestern Mojave Desert of Kern County, California, the limited rains of an arid environment have etched a theater of sculptured rock, Red Rock Canyon. The scenic inspiration and wonder, combined with unique biological and scientific values, led this badlands landscape to be preserved as a unit of the California State Park System. The future of this intricately carved cathedral, one of the California's most distinctive and beautiful terrains, is now being charted.

On December 13, 2008, California State Parks will host the first of a series of extraordinarily important public planning meetings designed to develop a management document for Red Rock Canyon State Park. This document must find the appropriate balance between public access and appreciation and the long term preservation of the sensitive heritage contained within this landscape. Californians first proposed public



preservation of these colorful canyon palisades in 1919. With the advent of the automobile, travel and access to the Mojave Desert and the scenic halls of Red Rock Canyon increased, and the aesthetic appreciation of the canyon began to soar. Camping became popular by the 1920s, and writers began touting the spectacular scenery.

One of Red Rock Canyon's most intriguing aspects is the way it bridges the gap between what is beautiful and what is scientific. The canyon cliffs reveal stratigraphy visited by over 60 colleges and universities on geologic field trips. Red Rock Canyon is an educational textbook, where sedimentary and volcanic processes as well as tectonic forces can be readily viewed, taught, and understood. These same rocks are one of the most extensive fossil beds in California. The local fossil heritage is so significant that it is considered the best example west of Nebraska for a portion of the Miocene Epoch, 75 to 12.5 million years before present. Many prehistoric species unique to science have been, and continue to be, discovered within these hallowed halls. Luckily these irreplaceable, sensitive fossils may be protected within Red Rock Canyon State Park.

Red Rock Canyon lies within a unique biotic province adjacent to the southern tip of the Sierra Nevada. This interface – where the Sierra and Mojave provinces intersect – has proven to be of considerable interest to biologists studying regional endemism. One of the most restricted species in California is the Red Rock Tarplant (*Deinandra arida*), which only exists within the State Park. This annual Tarplant maintains chemical properties that enable longevity through drier desert seasons and has adapted to tolerate even hot dry summer conditions, maintaining up to half of its population.

New scientific discoveries are not uncommon. During the spring of 2003, a day-flying moth (within the genus *Heliothodes*) was discovered living exclusively upon the Tarplant. While the adult moths feed on Tarplant pollen, their larvae feed on the sterile Tarplant disk flowers and rest under the shade canopy of the flower head umbrella to avoid the heat of the mid-day sun. This endemic moth is the most recent of several examples reminding us that future discoveries only await future research. In 1988 a new subspecies of Poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora twisselmannii*) was discovered. This Poppy is only known from a limited area, and 82% of the known population is found within Red Rock Canyon State Park. Yet another restricted species is Charlotte's Phacelia (*Phacelia nashiana*). Of slightly wider distribution, this indigo blue wildflower is an amazing part of any early spring flora display.

Leaving flora aside, one finds a similar assemblage of endemic fauna occupying this Sierran-Mohavean interface. It might seem to defy logic to discuss terrestrial snails in the desert, but such is the case. Two separate endemic species exist in the El Paso Mountains. The first species, known as the Small Miner (*Sonorelix micrometalleus*) was discovered in 1929 in Last Chance Canyon. It is a compressed, undersized snail – the smallest Mohavean helicoid. Sharing portions of the El Paso Mountains, a second species (*Helminthoglypta micrometalleoides*) was accidentally discovered in 1969 while researchers attempted to expand the known range of the Small Miner. Both snails live in very specialized habitats.

In 1986 a new species of Red Rock Canyon scorpion was identified. *Serradigitus torridus*, the Parched Toothed-Foot Scorpion, prefers rocky habitats where the species hides within small cracks and crevices. These Mohavean rare plants and animals are possible products of post-Ice Age isolation and evolution. As such, Red Rock Canyon becomes an intriguing laboratory for the continuing study of evolution and adaptation. Not all of the fascinating story of Red Rock Canyon involves natural history; some of it involves our own history as well. People have interacted with Red Rock Canyon for perhaps 10,000 years, and the evidence of human endeavors remains imprinted upon this fragile terrain. From Native Americans who treated Red Rock Canyon with both reverence and functionality to 1980s gold mining camps, from twentieth Century mines that provided the abrasive element to a product known as Old Dutch Cleanser to modern-day motion picture filming, we all have left our distinctive imprint upon local heritage.

Red Rock Canyon is a theater of beauty and science nearly unmatched in California. How we decide to use and preserve this heritage will determine if future generations will be able to appreciate the same resplendence we experience today. As California's population increases the competition for space becomes intensified. We realize that not everybody's dreams can be accommodated on any single parcel of ground. We also recognize the sensitivity of our desert landscapes and the slow rate of repair from either intentional or inadvertent damage.

Lest we love Red Rock Canyon to death, we all must accept certain restrictions. Even our individual recreational preferences can at times have an impact upon the enjoyment of others. Therefore, creating a sustainable park is a matter of accepting balance - the balance of nature, the balance of "use" versus "preservation," and the balancing of recreational opportunities within the greater Red Rock region. We, the people of California, will shape what future generations inherit. Beginning on Saturday December 13th our voices should and can be heard. Let us gift something to those yet unborn, a gem still shining brightly where poetry and science prevail. Your participation could be critical to determining such an outcome.

[Members may also be interested in reading the article on our Desert Flora at [www.desertreport.org](http://www.desertreport.org) – editor]

## Protect Red Rock Canyon State Park From Off-road Vehicles

from: The Center for Biological Diversity website

[http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2167/t/5243/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=26365](http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2167/t/5243/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=26365)

Red Rock Canyon State Park -- the crown jewel of California's state parks in the Western Mojave Desert -- needs your help! The park is currently revising its general management plan for the first time in 26 years. Please let California State Parks know that you support a plan that puts protection of resources first. This is critically important, because the new management plan will determine how the park is managed for at least the next 20 years.

Red Rock Canyon State park includes 27,000 acres of pristine desert landscape nestled in the southern Sierra Nevada and the El Paso Mountains in Kern County. Directly north and south of the park's boundaries are two Bureau of Land Management off-road vehicle open areas, where unregulated off-road riding is wreaking havoc on the landscape. Increased motor vehicle access will

further damage the park's unique resources as even more off-road vehicles rip up the rugged terrain. Precious riparian areas, which have been hurt in the past by de facto roads, are particularly vulnerable to destruction and degradation.

The park is home to many unique plants and animals, including the endangered Mohave ground squirrel and two plants that exist nowhere else in the world: the Red Rock poppy and the Mojave tarplant. The unique geology of the area, with canyons incised into sheer rock walls, is what gave the park its name. These canyons support lush riparian areas -- a rarity in the arid western Mojave desert, and a magnet for wildlife including golden eagles.

Please write State Parks now to let them know you support increased conservation and protection of the irreplaceable resources in the park. The agency's plan needs to reduce vehicular access into rare habitats including riparian and rare species habitat. Park improvements must be limited to those that only increase resource protection.

(A sample letter follows on the next page)



Sample letter:

Subject: Protect Red Rock Canyon State Park Resources

California State Parks Officials:

Red Rock Canyon State Park is a western Mojave Desert treasure that needs to be protected from resource degradation. Please revise the management plan to include the maximum protection of the superlative resources of this world-class desert park. Include the most rigorous conservation for the distinctive biodiversity of the flora and fauna, all rare species and their habitats, all riparian resources including those which have been damaged by current vehicle routes within the park. The riparian areas are literally the life blood of desert wildlife, so the highest level of protection should be afforded these critical areas.

Recreational opportunities should be limited to primarily non-motorized activities, in support not only of ecological protections but the aesthetic protection of the State Park's geological uniqueness and wilderness qualities. "Destination spots" accessed by motor vehicles should be carefully evaluated based on their conformity with the protection and conservation of wildlife, cultural, and geologic resources. Improvements should be minimized and focused on protection and conservation of the above-mentioned resources. Existing improvements need to be revisited to evaluate their effects on conservation of both natural and cultural resources and to rectify harm that existing improvements may be causing now to those resources.

**Please take action by January 19, 2009. Write to:**

Dave Keck, Supervisor, General Plan Section  
California State Parks Planning Division  
P.O. Box 942896  
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001



CNPS – Kern County Chapter

% Stephen Cooley, Editor

[mimulusmemo@bak.rr.com](mailto:mimulusmemo@bak.rr.com)

## INTERNET EDITION

The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.